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George Bancroft.

Phinney

HISTORY

OF THE

BATTLE AT LEXINGTON,

ON THE MORNING OF THE

19TH APRIL, 1775.

BY

ELIAS PHINNEY.

Boston:

PRINTED BY PHELPS AND FARNHAM,
No. 5, Court Street.

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1825.

1825



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TO THE
SURVIVING
OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS
OF THE
LEXINGTON COMPANY OF MILITIA,
WHO RAISED THE FIRST STANDARD OF
OPPOSITION TO BRITISH TYRANNY,
ON THE EVER-MEMORABLE MORNING OF THE
19th of April, 1775,
THIS
HUMBLE, THOUGH SINCERE
TRIBUTE OF GRATITUDE
FOR THEIR
HEROICK DEVOTEDNESS TO THE CAUSE OF CIVIL LIBERTY,
DISPLAYED ON
THAT TRYING AND MOMENTOUS OCCASION,
Is respectfully Dedicated
BY THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

NO apology, it is presumed, will be deemed necessary for placing before the publick, at this time, the following statement of facts, relative to the affair at Lexington, on the morning of the 19th of April, 1775. Those, who have undertaken to relate the events of that day, have omitted many important facts and circumstances, the tendency of which has been to diminish, in the publick estimation, the importance to the country of the stand made by the militia of Lexington on that morning. The character of the evidence, upon which historians have relied for information on this subject, may, no doubt, be ascribed as the cause of this omission. This consisted, principally, of certain *ex parte* depositions and individual statements, taken and made for particular purposes, immediately after the affair happened. Gen. Gage, and other apologists of British outrage, had asserted, that the people of Lexington commenced the attack upon the king's troops. The records and statements* of the transactions of that morning, which have been generally referred to, were made with a view of contradicting these false accounts,—of giving to the conduct of the British soldiery at Lexington the effect of rousing the just indignation of an oppressed and injured people,—to exonerate Capt. Parker, and the company under his command, from the charge of rashness, or of having done more than was actually necessary in self-defence,—and also to persuade the people of this country and of Great Britain, that the king's troops, in the attack made upon the militia at Lexington, had been guilty of an act of the most deliberate murder.—The question, then, to be decided was, whether the Americans fired FIRST, not whether they fired AT ALL. Besides, the principle of law, that a person was not bound to state any facts in evidence, which might tend to criminate himself, was as well known at that day as at the present. The struggle had just commenced, and the issue was

* Depositions of Capt. John Parker and others,—Narrative by the Rev. Jonas Clark,—and A Letter of Rev. William Gordon to a Gentleman in England, published in this country in 1776.

quite doubtful. It could not have been expected of those, who had taken an active part in the affair at Lexington, that they would voluntarily disclose facts, which *might*, in all probability, as they then considered, expose themselves or their friends to the British halter.

The inhabitants of Lexington feel it to be particularly incumbent on them to lay this statement of facts before the publick, at this time, on account of some recent publications stating that "AT CONCORD THE FIRST BLOOD WAS SHED BETWEEN THE BRITISH AND THE ARMED AMERICANS;" and also, that the "FIRST FORCIBLE RESISTANCE" was made at that place.

These statements, coming from very respectable sources, were viewed by the people of Lexington as not only calculated to give an erroneous impression to the world respecting *the place*, where the revolutionary war commenced; but, more particularly, to deprive the town of Lexington of the honour of having raised the first standard of an armed opposition to the unjust and tyrannical measures of the mother country. The citizens of Lexington consider it also an indispensable duty, which they owe as well to the memory of their fellow townsmen, whose blood became the first offering upon the altar of their country's freedom, as to their survivors, who boldly dared to begin the bloody conflict for independence, to endeavour to show, by a simple statement of well authenticated facts, the inaccuracy of these recent publications. If these statements should be received and handed down as correct matter for the historian, the people of Lexington plainly foresaw, that, when the present generation shall have passed away, and the hand of time shall have erased the inscription upon the humble, though imperishable monument, erected in grateful commemoration of their brave and patriotick townsmen, who fell in the first glorious attempt to defend the liberties of the country,—future generations might ask, in vain, to know the cause, for which this monument was raised.—Accordingly, at a publick town meeting, recently called for the purpose, the inhabitants appointed a committee, consisting of the Hon. Nathan Chandler, Rev. Charles Briggs, Elias Phinney, Abijah Harrington, Amos Muzzy, Charles Reed, John Muzzy, Benjamin O. Wellington, and Francis Bowman, Jun. Esquires, to collect and publish a statement of such facts, relative to the affair at Lexington, on the morning of the 19th of April, '75, as may be supported by undoubted testimony, and which may be calculated to place the transactions of that day before the publick in their true light. In discharging this commission, the committee have strictly aimed at the truth, not assuming any thing for fact, which was not proved by satisfactory evidence.

HISTORY,

&c.

IN the beginning of the year 1774, the British Parliament passed an act "for the better regulation of the government of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England."* The object of this law was to enable the king to take the life of any citizen of this Commonwealth at his pleasure; not, however, without the pretended solemnity of judicial proceedings. The dark and murderous designs upon the lives and liberties of these colonial subjects were to be effected in the following manner: The governour, who held his office by direct appointment from the king, was to appoint the justices of the Supreme Court, and the sheriffs. The jurors were not to be appointed by the freeholders, as had before been the course, but to be summoned by the sheriffs. Constables were required to deliver to the justices, annually, a list of the persons qualified to be jurors, and the justices were to deliver a copy of this list to the sheriffs, with the intent, that the justices and the sheriff should ascertain the political character of those on the list. In default of such list, the sheriff was to summon whom he pleased from among the people. If the list was returned, the selection was to be made from that. Thus the governour was the creature of the king; the justices and sheriffs the creatures of the governour, appointed without consent of the council; and the jurors the creatures of the sheriff. The king therefore, when so disposed, could, by means of this law, despatch any citizen of this Commonwealth obnoxious to him, by merely intimating to the governour, that such was his will and pleasure. But the same Parliament, judg-

* Ancient Charters, page 785.

ing it highly probable, that the people of this colony would resist the execution of their bloody and tyrannical proceedings, passed another law, about the same time, providing, that, if any person should be indicted for murder or other capital offence committed in aiding magistracy, the governour might send such person to another colony, or to Great Britain, to be tried.* This was providing a more summary mode than a publick mock trial, to take the life of the accused citizen, and subjected him at once to the British bayonet.—In the first place, it was not probable, that a grand jury, thus selected by the sheriff, would indict the soldier, who might be guilty of murdering a citizen; but, if this unexpected event of being indicted should happen, the law provided for him a retreat from danger.

Gen. Gage arrived in Boston the 13th May, 1774. On the 6th September following, the delegates of Suffolk county resolved, that no obedience was due to the said acts. Gen. Warren is supposed to have written these resolves, which were afterward expressly sanctioned by the Continental Congress. In the same month, the Provincial Congress resolved to enlist men to turn out at a minute's warning, and elected three generals, Preble, Ward and Pomeroy. In November, they resolved to raise twelve thousand men, and that a fourth part of the militia should be enlisted as minute men, and notified the neighbouring colonies, and the ministers of the several towns in the province, of these bold and patriotick resolutions, and apprized them of the bloody scenes, which they apprehended to be approaching.

In the same month of November, the king informed his Parliament, that he had taken measures to carry these laws into execution, which the House of Commons, in their answer, approved, as did also the House of Lords. At this portentous moment, Lord Chatham, who clearly perceived, that some catastrophe, awful and tremendous to England, would soon take place in Massachusetts, suddenly appeared in the House of Peers, and exerted his utmost eloquence to have the British troops removed from Boston; but in vain.

On the 9th February, 1775, the Lords and Commons jointly addressed the king, and requested him to enforce obedience to

* Holmes's Annals, Vol. II. page 308.

these laws, and assured him they would stand by him with their lives and property.*

On the same 9th day of February, the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, then in session at Cambridge, resolved, that "Jedediah Preble, Artemas Ward, Seth Pomeroy, John Thomas, and William Heath, be, and hereby are appointed general officers, whose business and duty it shall be, with such and so many of the militia of this province as shall be assembled by order of the Committee of Safety, effectually *to oppose and resist* such attempt or attempts as shall be made for carrying into execution an act of the British Parliament, entitled 'An Act for the better regulation of the government of the Province of Massachusetts Bay in New England,' and who shall attempt the carrying into execution by force another act of the British Parliament, entitled 'An Act for the more impartial administration of justice in cases of persons, who shall be questioned for any act done by them in the execution of the law, or for the suppression of riots and tumults in the Province of Massachusetts Bay,' so long as the said militia shall be retained by the Committee of Safety, and no longer. And the said general officers shall, while in said service, command, lead, and conduct in the said opposition, in the order in which they are above named." Preble declined the service, and, on the 15th February, John Whitcomb was appointed in his place.†

The nature and object of the laws mentioned in this resolve, have been before explained. This resolve, which is, in fact, little short of a declaration of war against an empire, at that time, perhaps, the most powerful in the eastern hemisphere, by one of its provinces, is very remarkable for its calm language, minute details, and great precision. It indicates the great dignity and the exalted patriotism of the Provincial Congress, and, at the same time, is demonstrative of a consciousness, that the justice of their cause did not admit of a doubt. The contrast exhibited by the king's speech, and the Parliamentary proceedings of the same period, is equally remarkable. In them, violent denunciations indicate the tumult and rage of unprincipled men,

* Holmes's Annals, Vol. II.

† Heath's Memoirs.

conscious, that they were exerting a mighty force in a wicked and infamous cause.

The immediate cause, then, of the Battle of Lexington, was the attempt of the British troops to carry into execution these arbitrary and detestable laws, *directly*, by seizing the persons of some eminent patriots, and *indirectly*, by destroying the Provincial stores. The issue, for the trial of which the appeal to arms was finally made, was, whether the British king and his soldiers should take the lives of our citizens at their pleasure.

The town of Lexington is about twelve miles north-west of Boston, and six miles south-east of Concord. It was originally a part of Cambridge, and, previous to its separation from that town, was called the "Cambridge Farms." The act of incorporation bears date March 20, 1712. The inhabitants consist principally of hardy and independent yeomanry. In 1775, the list of enrolled militia bore the names of over one hundred citizens.

The road leading from Boston divides near the centre of the village in Lexington. The part leading to Concord passes to the left, and that leading to Bedford to the right of the meeting-house, and form two sides of a triangular green or common, on the south corner of which stands the meeting-house, facing directly down the road leading to Boston. The road is perfectly straight for about one hundred rods below the meeting-house, and nearly level. The common is a pleasant, level green, containing about two acres, surrounded by trees, having, on the left, a gently rising knoll, on which stands a monument, of granite, "erected by the town in 1799, under the patronage and at the expense of the Commonwealth," and bears the names of those who "fell the first victims to the sword" of British aggression, on the morning of the 19th of April, 1775. The meeting-house, which was built in 1794, stands about twenty feet north of the ground, on which the former house stood. At the right of the meeting-house, and separated from it by the road leading to Bedford, stands the tavern house, late Buckman's, now Meriam's. On the north side of the green, in the rear of the meeting-house, at about twenty rods distant, are a number of buildings, standing nearly on a line, which forms the northern boundary of the common. North of these is a tract of low,

swampy ground ; behind which the land becomes hilly. The other grounds in the neighbourhood of the village are hilly and broken.

At a very early period of those controversies with the mother country, which preceded the revolutionary war, the inhabitants of Lexington took a firm and decided stand in favour of the rights and liberties of the province. On all questions, which agitated the publick mind, they unanimously acted with promptness and energy. Earnest in their professions of attachment to the common cause, they cheerfully made every sacrifice, which the common good required. Their pastor, the late Rev. Jonas Clark, had been their minister from the year 1755. His alliance, by marriage, to the family of John Hancock* led to an intimacy between them, which subsisted as long as Gov. Hancock lived. To this circumstance may, in some measure, be attributed the early participation, as well as the firm and spirited patriotism manifested by Mr. Clark, on all subjects connected with the liberty and independence of the country. Few men could appeal to the hearts or understandings of their hearers with better effect ; and no clergyman did more to strengthen the hands and encourage the hearts of his people. To a mind well endowed with practical knowledge, Mr. Clark joined an unusual share of well directed zeal, and an ardency of character, which would have gained him distinction in a sphere much more elevated than the one, in which he was destined to move. His spirited eloquence was employed, on all proper occasions, in rousing his hearers to a sense of the dangers, which threatened their liberties, and in urging them to the adoption of measures, which might either avert, or enable them to meet without dismay the impending crisis.

The records of the town of Lexington furnish ample and honourable testimony of the interest which was felt, and the zeal with which the inhabitants participated in those important

* Mrs. Clark's mother was the sister of Gov. Hancock. The Rev. John Hancock, grandfather of Gov. Hancock, was the immediate predecessor of Mr. Clark, in the ministry, at Lexington. His eldest son, the Rev. John Hancock of Braintree, a highly accomplished preacher, was father of the governour.

publick measures, which resulted in our glorious revolution. In 1765, the inhabitants, in publick town meeting, unanimously expressed their disapprobation of the stamp act. They complained, "that it was unequal, unjust, and imposing a yoke upon them too heavy to be borne,—a direct violation of the rights and privileges secured to them by the charter." At the same time, they instructed their "representative in the Great and General Court not to encourage, aid or assist in the execution of said act; but to endeavour, as far as consistent with allegiance and duty to their rightful sovereign, by all calm and dispassionate, but with firm, explicit and resolute measures, to assert their charter rights and privileges; and to have the same so entered upon record, that the world might see, and future generations know, that the present both knew and valued their rights, and did not tamely resign them for chains and slavery."

At a publick meeting of the inhabitants of the town, in 1768, called for the purpose of taking into consideration the distressing situation of the province, after reciting the charter of William and Mary, by which all the rights and immunities of free and natural subjects, which were enjoyed by those born within the realm of England, were granted to the inhabitants of this province, and that the General Court therein constituted have the sole right to impose all taxes necessary for the support of his majesty's government of the province, and the protection of his subjects therein, it was resolved, "that the attempt of the British Parliament to levy money within this province, in any other manner than is pointed out by the said royal charter, is a violation thereof." They protested against the right of the king or Parliament to tax them, except by their own consent, or by representatives of their own free election; or to maintain standing armies among them in time of peace. At the same time, they made choice of a suitable person "to join such as were, or might be, sent from the several towns in the province, to consult and advise what might be best for the publick good at that critical juncture."

In December, 1772, they earnestly recommended to their representative in "the Great Court of Inquest for the Province," "to use his utmost influence, by all impartial and dispassionate

measures, to effect a radical and lasting redress of their grievances, so that, whether successful or not, succeeding generations might know, that they understood their rights and liberties, and were neither ashamed nor afraid to assert and maintain them; and that they might have the consolation, in their chains, that it was not through their neglect, that the people were enslaved."

In December, 1773, the town unanimously resolved, that they would not, either directly or indirectly, be concerned in buying, selling or using any of the teas sent out by the East India Company, or that should be imported, subject to a duty imposed by an act of Parliament made for the purpose of raising a revenue in America; and that if any head of a family in that town, or any other person, should, from that time forth, or until the duty was taken off, purchase, use or consume any tea in their families, they should be treated with neglect and contempt.

During the year 1774, numerous town meetings were held, at which it was "voted to renew and increase the town's stock of ammunition;" "to encourage military discipline, and to put themselves in a posture of defence against their enemies." It was expected, at this time, that the British Parliament would soon attempt to enforce their arbitrary and tyrannical law, passed as before stated, "for the better regulation of the government of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay." The "training band" and "alarm list" were desired to meet on the 12th December, 1774, to receive arms and ammunition, which had been provided at the expense of the town; and, on the 28th December, it was voted to supply the "training soldiers" with bayonets.

By these spirited, but cool and dispassionate measures, the town of Lexington manifested their hatred to oppression, and their devotedness to the cause of liberty. Their proceedings in town meetings were succeeded by deliberate preparations to resist the encroachments of arbitrary power; till at length they came to the resolute determination, as their last and only resort, to defend their rights at the point of the bayonet.

The Provincial Congress had been in session for some time at Concord, and were about adjourning, on the 30th March, '75,

when some representations, made by those, who had suffered by the depredations of the British troops, on their recent excursion to Jamaica Plains, kept them together until the 2d of April.* On that day, they received information, by an arrival from Falmouth in England, of the obnoxious proceedings of the king and Parliament on the 9th of February. This information was communicated to the people before the governour had received his despatches, which were brought by the vessel from Falmouth. From some intimations, contained in an intercepted letter, by the same vessel, from a Mr. Manduit in England to Commissary Hallowell, it was reported, that some of the leading patriots of the province were to be seized and tried under the provisions of that wicked and sanguinary law of February, 1774, by which the lives of our best citizens might be taken in a manner embracing the form of a trial, but, in fact, a mere judicial mockery. The people of the province, then, were reduced to the alternative of open hostilities, or cruel and abject slavery. Freemen, who knew and valued their privileges, did not hesitate as to the course to be pursued. They had been exhorted at trainings, and from the sacred desk, to defend their constitutional rights, and to *fight manfully* in the cause of "*God and their country.*"

John Hancock and Samuel Adams were at this time attending the Provincial Congress. The active and inflexible patriotism of these friends to liberty, had exposed them to the severe animadversions of men in power. In consequence of the recent measures of the king and Parliament, they were persuaded by their friends not to return to Boston immediately after the termination of the session. They had passed their nights, during the session, at the house of the Rev. Mr. Clark in Lexington; and they tarried there from the time it closed until the morning of the 19th of April.

Under a pretence of teaching the grenadiers and light infantry a new mode of exercising, Gen. Gage had detached about eight hundred of these from the main body of his troops, and marched them to another part of the town of Boston. The real object of this movement was, however, suspected by Gen-

* Gordon's Letter.

Warren, and immediately communicated to his friends in the neighbouring country towns. This took place a few days before they marched for Concord.

In the afternoon of the 18th, Gen. Gage sent out a number of his officers, a part of them through Roxbury, and a part over the ferry, through Charlestown, to reconnoitre and watch the movements of the people, and, at a proper time, to seize and detain all persons on the road, whom they might suspect of being engaged in carrying intelligence of the intended march of his troops to Concord. Solomon Brown, of Lexington, who had been to market at Boston on the 18th, returned late in the afternoon, and informed Col. William Munroe, then an orderly sergeant of the militia company, that he had seen nine British officers, dressed in blue great coats, passing leisurely up the road, sometimes before and sometimes behind him, armed, as he had discovered by the occasional blowing aside of their great coats. Munroe, suspecting their intention was to seize Hancock and Adams, immediately collected a guard of eight men, well armed and equipped, and placed them, with himself at their head, at the house of Mr. Clark, which was about a quarter of a mile from the main road leading to Concord. The Committee of Safety, then in session in the westerly part of Cambridge, also sent information to Hancock and Adams of the approach of these officers. They passed through town early in the evening on the road to Concord.

Small parties of British officers, in the spring of that year, had frequently been seen making excursions into the country, early in the day, and returning before evening. But the unusually late hour of their passing up, at this time, excited the attention of the citizens, and drew together, at an early hour of the evening, about thirty of the militia, well armed, and ready for any emergency, to which the critical and alarming state of things might suddenly call them. It had been currently reported, that the British had threatened, that Hancock and Adams should not stay at Lexington; and it was generally believed to be the object of the officer, who had passed up, to return secretly, at a late hour of the night, and seize and carry them to Boston. After some consultation, it was concluded

by the persons present to send three of their number, Saunders, Brown, and Loring, toward Concord, to watch the British officers, and endeavour to ascertain and give information of their movements. In the borders of Lincoln, the whole three were taken prisoners by the British officers, who were paraded across the road. During the time they held our men in custody, they took two other prisoners, Col. Paul Revere, and one Allen, a one-handed pedlar. Shortly after they released Allen. They also attempted to stop a young man, by the name of Prescott, belonging to Concord; but, being well mounted, he turned from the road into the field, and, putting spurs to his horse, escaped. Several of the officers pursued, but could not overtake him.

At about ten o'clock in the evening of the 18th, a detachment of British troops, consisting of grenadiers and light infantry, in all about eight hundred, embarked from Boston in boats, and landed at Lechmere's Point in Cambridge, just as the moon rose. To prevent discovery, they took a by-path leading to the main road, which obliged them to wade through marshy places and water to a considerable depth.

Soon after these troops had left, sentinels were posted at every avenue of the town, to prevent carrying the intelligence of their march into the country. Previously, however, Gen. Warren, ever watchful and active in devising, as he was undaunted in executing, the best measures for the safety of the country, had despatched two messengers, Col. Paul Revere and a Mr. Lincoln, with information to Hancock and Adams. Revere passed over the ferry to Charlestown, procured a horse of the late Deacon Larkin, and rode with all speed to Lexington, where he arrived a little after midnight. The family of Mr. Clark had retired to rest. On the arrival of Revere, he was hailed by the guard, and stopped. He desired to be admitted to the house. Munroe, not knowing him, nor the object of his errand, refused to let him pass, stating, that the family had just retired to rest, and had desired, that they might not be disturbed by any noise about the house. "Noise!" said Revere, "you'll soon have a noise, that will disturb you all. The British troops are on their march, and will soon be among you." He passed without further ceremony, and knocked at the door. Mr. Clark immedi-

ately opened a window, and inquired who was there. Revere, without replying to the question, said he wished to see Mr. Hancock. Mr. Clark, with his usual deliberation, was going on to observe, that it was a critical time, and he did not like to admit people into his house, at that time of night, without first knowing their business, when Hancock, who had retired to *rest*, but not to *sleep*, knew Revere's voice, and cried out, "Come in, Revere; we are not afraid of you." Shortly after, Mr. Lincoln, who had come by the way of Roxbury, arrived. They both brought written communications from Gen. Warren, "That a large body of the king's troops, (supposed to be a brigade of twelve or fifteen hundred,) were embarked in boats from Boston, and gone over to Lechmere's Point in Cambridge, and it was suspected, they were ordered to seize and destroy the stores belonging to the colony, then deposited at Concord."

It was immediately decided to alarm the militia; and a number of the guard were sent off for that purpose. Two of their number went toward Cambridge, to ascertain the movements of the troops. For the better security of the persons of Hancock and Adams, they were advised to retire to the house of a Mr. Reed, at the north part of the town. To this Hancock objected in the strongest terms, declaring, "it never should be said of him, that he had turned his back upon the British." His preservation was urged to be of the utmost importance to the country, and, being destitute of arms, he could do but little in opposing the British troops. He, at length, very reluctantly consented, and Col. Munroe conducted him, in company with Adams, about two miles to the northward of Mr. Clark's. Revere set off for Concord to alarm the people of that town, but was taken prisoner by the British officers, as before stated, near Brooks's in Lincoln. They examined him very closely,—asked many questions, to all of which he gave evasive answers. They detained him, with the other three prisoners from Lexington, till near three o'clock in the morning, when, finding no prospect of escape, Revere, in his turn, attempted to frighten them, by telling them, in a very triumphant tone of voice, "Gentlemen, you have missed your aim. I left Boston after your troops had landed at Lechmere's Point, and if I had not been certain, that

the people, to the distance of fifty miles into the country, had been notified of your movements, I would have risked one shot, before you should have taken me." Another told them, "The bell's ringing, the country is alarmed, and you are all dead men." This appeared, in some measure, to alarm the officers. After a few moments' consultation among themselves, they set off on their return to Lexington, keeping possession of their four prisoners, till within a short distance of the meeting-house, when they halted, and ordered their prisoners to dismount, and then, after cutting in pieces the bridles and saddles of the horses, on which the prisoners rode, they abandoned them, and rode off at full gallop toward Boston.

The alarm had spread so rapidly through Lexington, that, by two o'clock in the morning, the militia company had nearly all assembled. Capt. Parker ordered the roll to be called, and every man to charge his gun with powder and ball. After remaining on parade for some time, one of the messengers, who had been sent toward Boston, returned and reported, he could not learn that the regulars were coming. This raised some doubt as to the correctness of the account brought by Revere, and, the weather being cool, the company were dismissed, with orders to appear again at the beat of the drum. Some of them, whose houses were in the immediate neighbourhood of the place of parade, went home; but the greater part of the company went into Buckman's tavern, near the meeting-house.

The march of the British troops was silent and rapid. One of the messengers, sent by our people to ascertain if they were coming, was surprised before he was aware of their approach, and taken prisoner in Cambridge.* They thus continued their march undiscovered, taking and detaining as prisoners every person they met with on the road, till they had arrived within a mile and a half of Lexington meeting-house. In order to secure persons travelling upon the road, they would send two soldiers at a considerable distance in advance of the main body, with orders to secrete themselves, one on each side of the road, and when any one approached, they would allow him to pass

* Rev. Mr. Clark's Narrative.

them, so as to get between them and the troops, and then rise and close upon him. In this way they had taken a number of our men, who had been sent to get information of their approach. Thaddeus Bowman, the last one sent on this business, was riding pretty rapidly down the road, and had proceeded about a mile and a half, when his horse became suddenly frightened, stopped, and refused to go forward. In a moment he discovered the cause. Two British soldiers were perceived just ahead, sitting on opposite sides of the way, close to the fence. It was then day-light. While Bowman was unsuccessfully endeavouring, by all the means of whip and spur, to urge his horse forward, not conceiving of their plan to entrap him, he caught a glimpse of the main body of the British troops, then about twenty rods off. He instantly turned his horse, and rode with all possible speed to the meeting-house, and gave Capt. Parker the first certain intelligence of the approach of the king's troops. About the same time that Bowman discovered them, a flanking party made prisoner of Benjamin Wellington, who was within about ten rods of the main road, on his way to join the company at the meeting-house. They took his arms from him, and, on his promise to return home, he was released. Wellington, however, took a cross route to the meeting-house, and reached there soon after Bowman. There was no longer any doubt, that the regulars were coming. Capt. Parker ordered alarm guns to be fired, and the drum beat to arms. The orderly sergeant, William Munroe, was ordered to parade the men in two ranks a few rods north of the meeting-house. Sixty or seventy had joined the ranks. At a little before five o'clock in the morning, the enemy appeared, at the distance of eighty or a hundred rods from our line. Hearing the drum beat to arms, and supposing it to be a challenge,* and seeing the militia parading in arms, they were ordered to halt, charge their guns, double their ranks, and then to march at *double quick time*.

That so small a number of raw and inexperienced militia should have been, in some degree, appalled at the formidable appearance made by eight hundred regular troops,† is not surpris-

* Appendix, No. 2.

† Then supposed to be twelve or fifteen hundred.

ing. Some of Capt. Parker's men, seeing the British load their muskets, and noticing their quick movements, showed an inclination to quit the ranks; on which the captain gave orders for every man to stand his ground, and said he would order the first man shot, who should leave his post.* Others expressed their determination "never to run." At the same time, they were strictly ordered by Capt. Parker not to fire, unless they were attacked by the enemy. The British troops came up shouting, and almost upon a run, till within about ten rods of our line. Their commander, Lieut. Col. Smith, advanced a few rods, and exclaimed, "*Lay down your arms and disperse, you damned rebels!—Rush on my boys!—Fire!*" and fired his own pistol. The order to fire not being instantly obeyed, he again called out, brandishing his sword with great fury, "Fire, G—d damn you! fire!" The first platoon then fired over the heads of our men. Col. Smith repeating his order to "fire," a general discharge from the front ranks was made directly into the American ranks. On receiving the fire of the first platoon, the Provincials imagined the regulars had fired nothing but powder, and did not offer to return it; but, on the second discharge, seeing some of their numbers fall, and others wounded, they no longer hesitated as to their right to resist, and some of them immediately returned the fire. Jonas Parker, John Munroe, and Ebenezer Munroe, Jun. and some others, fired, before leaving the line. At the same time, Solomon Brown, who was not enrolled in the militia, was seen to fire from a wall near the left of our line, and another person was seen to fire from the back door of Buckman's house.

These and some others fired, immediately on receiving the second fire from the British. Jonas Parker placed his ammunition in his hat, upon the ground, between his feet. He was wounded and fell on the second fire from the enemy. After this, he discharged his piece, and even attempted to load a second time. He had been frequently heard to say, he "would never run from the British troops." He redeemed his pledge, though with the price of his life. While attempting to load his piece a second time, the British soldiers came up, and run him

* Appendix, No. 3.

through with the bayonet. Ebenezer Munroe, Jun. aimed and fired, after receiving one ball through his arm; another had grazed his cheek, and a third passed between his arm and body, marking his coat. John Munroe, after having fired, retreated a few rods, loaded his piece a second time with two balls, and discharged it at the enemy. One of our men was seen firing from Buckman's front door. The effects of the fire returned at him by the enemy are now visible on the sides of the door. Nathan Munroe, Lieut. Benjamin Tidd, and others, retreated a short distance, and fired. The regulars continued to fire as long as they could see a man of Capt. Parker's company in arms. Jonas Parker, Isaac Muzzy, Jonathan Harrington, and Robert Munroe, were killed on the common, on and near where our line was formed; Samuel Hadley and John Brown, after they had gotten off the common. Asahel Porter, of Woburn, who had been taken prisoner by the British on their march to Lexington, attempted at this time to make his escape, and was shot within a few rods of the common. Caleb Harrington, who, with three others, had gone into the meeting-house for the purpose of replenishing their stock of powder, just before the British troops came up, was killed on attempting to run from the house.*

Joshua Simonds was one of the four, that went into the meeting-house for the above purpose. They had succeeded in getting down two quarter casks of powder from the upper loft into the first gallery, and had taken out the head of one of them, when the troops arrived in front of the house. Harrington and Comie determined to hazard an attempt to escape. The third secreted himself in the opposite gallery. Simonds cocked his gun, and, laying down, placed the muzzle of it on the open cask of powder, determining, as he afterward frequently declared, to blow up the house, in case any of the regulars had come into the gallery.

The British suffered but little from the fire of the Ameri-

* John Robbins, Solomon Pierce, John Tidd, Joseph Comie, Ebenezer Munroe, Thomas Winship, Nathaniel Farmer, Jedidiah Munroe, and Prince Estabrook, were wounded by the fire from the British in the morning. Jedidiah Munroe, though wounded in the morning, followed the enemy on their retreat, and was killed in the afternoon.

cans. One of the tenth regiment of their light troops was wounded by a shot through the leg, and another was wounded in the hand.* When Munroe and others fired from the line, where our militia were drawn up, they could not discern the enemy by reason of the smoke. Solomon Brown and the person seen to fire from Buckman's back door were on the right of the British troops as they came up, and so situated as to have a distinct view of them, after they fired. Brown was seen to take aim, and, probably, gave the wound received by the regular of the tenth regiment, as blood† was distinctly seen upon the ground, soon after the battle, a few rods south of the meeting-house, where the main column of the enemy stood when the Americans fired, and in the direction, in which Brown was seen to aim his piece.

Some of our militia retreated up the road leading to Bedford, but most of them across a swamp, to a rising ground north of the common. The buildings and fences, on the north side of the common, afforded shelter, to a few, from the destructive fire of the enemy. As soon as the Lexington company had dispersed, and the firing ceased, the British troops drew up on the common, fired a volley, and gave three huzzas in token of victory. They then marched on for Concord, the next village, about six miles beyond, where they arrived without further opposition. Some of the Americans, who had not withdrawn at a great distance, were on the battle ground immediately after the enemy took up their march for Concord, and made prisoners of six regulars,‡ who were in the rear of the main body. They were

* Hist. Coll. Vol. IV. Sec. Series, and Ebenezer Munroe's affidavit.

† Appendix, Nos. 1 and 9.

‡ The king's troops were delayed at Lexington from twenty to thirty minutes. While there, it is supposed, these six of their soldiers, who were taken prisoners, had gone into some of the houses in the village, and were left behind by the main body. They were not in a body when taken, not more than two being taken together. They were all taken within half an hour after the main body of the enemy had left the common. That there were prisoners taken on the morning of the 19th, does not admit of a doubt. The fact, that the number of six were taken, rests upon the affidavit of James Reed of Burlington, an intelligent and

disarmed, and put under guard, and conducted to Woburn Precinct, now Burlington; thence they were taken to Chelmsford.

The Lexington company of militia, assembled on this trying occasion, had little time to deliberate. They had not the advantage of any special order or direction from any superior officer. They knew it would not be right for them to commence the attack upon the British; yet they felt it a duty to be in arms, to resist the execution of those obnoxious and wicked laws, by which they were to be deprived of rights, held dearer than life. Regardless of the event, as to themselves, they thought it was required of them to raise the standard of opposition. Thus situated, the occasion seemed to call them to be offered an unresisting sacrifice for the publick good. History affords few examples of men, called upon by their country to give such a sanguinary proof of unyielding courage and disinterested virtue. Yet these gallant men showed themselves equal to this great trial. Their purpose was accomplished. The "mighty struggle" was begun.*

The report of the bloody transaction at Lexington was spreading in every direction with the rapidity of a whirlwind. The people were seen, in arms, moving swiftly to the scene of action.

The alarm reached Concord about the hour of four in the morning. The time was diligently improved by the inhabitants in removing and concealing the publick stores. When the enemy approached the town, the Americans then collected retired

respectable farmer, of substantial, correct character, and of unquestionable veracity. See affidavits of John Munroe, Ebenezer Munroe, and James Reed, in the Appendix.

* Gordon, Botta, Lendrum, Holmes, and others, expressly assert, that, at the first attack of the British troops at Lexington, some of the Americans returned their fire. All other historians, within the knowledge of the writer, impliedly assert the fact of there having been firing on the part of the Americans. The writer knows of no historian, who has described the events of that day, except Mr. Bradford, in his late History of Massachusetts, that has asserted, that the Americans, on being "ORDERED" by the British commander "*to disperse, did immediately retire.*"

across the north bridge to the high ground beyond it, and there waited for reinforcements from the adjacent country.

The enemy halted near the meeting-house, sent parties of troops to various places in the town in search of publick stores, and detached one hundred men to take possession of the bridge, over which the militia had retreated.

Concord River, with a slow current, flows along the north-westerly and northerly side of the village, at a short distance from the houses. The north bridge was about half a mile from the meeting-house to the north. The left bank of the river consists of level, wet ground. From the bridge the road was a causeway, leading westerly over the wet grounds toward Acton. The road from the hills, where the Americans were stationed, ran southerly, till it met the causeway at right angles. This bridge across the river was long since taken away; the abutments and causeway, however, are still to be seen.

The Provincial militia, on the hills, perceiving the British troops attempting to remove the planks from the bridge, were encouraged by the brave Col. Robinson and Maj. Buttrick to advance, with orders not to fire, unless fired upon. They accordingly marched toward the bridge with drums beating, the Acton company, commanded by Capt. Davis, marching at the head of the column, led on by Robinson, Buttrick and Davis. This company exhibited a noble self-devotedness, equal to that, which, on the same morning, had been displayed by the Lexington company, under circumstances peculiarly trying to the bravest men. They had not then received intelligence of the events at Lexington, and, in their apprehension, the state of things required, that, for the publick good, they must expose themselves to the enemy's fire.

The British troops had formed on the right bank of the river, and, when the Americans had advanced sufficiently near, they fired across it, and Capt. Davis and one of his men were instantly killed, and several wounded. The Americans returned the fire with effect, killing two, and wounding several others. They then rushed across the bridge, and drove the enemy back, till they were met by a reinforcement. They then took a posi-

tion on a hill north of the village, where other Provincials were continually joining them.

The king's troops, having effected but in part their object, in the destruction of publick property,* retreated in great haste about noon. As the rear of their column entered on a causeway, leading over a meadow, a little to the eastward of the village, they received a heavy fire from the Reading minute men, under Capt. John Brooks.†

The Americans, who had by this time collected in considerable numbers, pressed upon the British troops with great fury, and kept up a constant and well directed fire from every favourable position. Such positions occurred very frequently, the road from Concord to Lexington being very hilly and crooked, and having, at that time, many forests and thickets near it. The enemy returned the fire of the Americans, but without much effect. In Lincoln they were met by the Lexington company under Capt. Parker, who had collected most of his men, and was proceeding to Concord. Capt. Parker turned aside into the fields, and, as the enemy passed, they were exposed to a most galling and deadly fire from his greatly exasperated men. The pursuers had now mustered in such numbers, and hung so close upon their rear, that the British officers could with difficulty preserve the order of their troops. All was hurry and confusion; and so entirely were they exhausted, they must, no doubt, have soon surrendered to the victorious Americans, had they not been met at Lexington by a reinforcement, consisting of a thousand fresh troops, with two field pieces, under Lord Percy. The retreating troops halted a mile below the meeting-house, and, having taken some refreshment, they proceeded, under cover of

* While at Concord, the enemy disabled two twenty-four pounders, destroying their carriages, wheels and limbers; sixteen wheels for brass three pounders; two carriages, with wheels, for two four pounders; about five hundred weight of balls, which they threw into the river and wells; and stove about sixty barrels of flour, one half of which was afterward saved. *Gordon's Account.*

† Afterward Gov. Brooks.

their field pieces, to plunder, burn and destroy buildings and property in that part of the town.*

After having dressed their wounded,† the king's troops resumed their retreat toward Boston. No sooner were they in motion, than the Americans again pressed upon them, with a still more furious and intrepid attack. The Lexington company, with unabated ardour, joined in the pursuit, and the firing on both sides, with little or no intermission, continued until the enemy ascended Bunker Hill at the close of the day.

* A dwelling house and barn belonging to Deacon Loring, Mrs. Lydia Mulliken's house, and her son's shop, and a house and shop of Mr. Joshua Bond, were laid in ashes. Several other buildings were set on fire, but the flames were fortunately extinguished after the enemy left. Property to a considerable amount, consisting of clothing, furniture, provisions, &c. were wantonly destroyed. *Mr. Clark's Narrative.*

† William Munroe's affidavit.

The following is a correct List of the Provincials, who were killed, wounded and missing in the Action of the 19th of April, and the towns to which they respectively belonged.

LEXINGTON.

		Killed.	Wound.	Missing.
Jonas Parker,	{			
Robert Munroe,				
Samuel Hadley,				
Jonathan Harrington, Jun.				
Isaac Muzzy,				
Caleb Harrington,	{			
John Brown,				
Jedidiah Munroe,				
John Raymond,				
Nathaniel Wyman,				
John Robbins,	{			
Solomon Pierce,				
John Tidd,				
Joseph Comie,				
Ebenezer Munroe, Jun.				
Thomas Winship,	{			
Nathaniel Farmer,				
Prince Estabrook,				
Jedidiah Munroe,				
Francis Brown, wounded in the afternoon.				

CAMBRIDGE.

William Marcy,	{			
Moses Richardson,				
John Hicks,				
Jason Russell,				
Jabish Wyman,				
Jason Winship,	{			
Samuel Whittemore,				
Samuel Frost,	{			
Seth Russell,				

CONCORD.

Charles Miles,	{			
Nathan Barnet,				
Abel Prescott,				

NEEDHAM.				Killed.	Wound.	Missing.	
Lieut. John Bourn,	}	<i>Killed.</i>	5				
Elisha Mills,							
Amos Mills,							
Nathaniel Chamberlain,							
Jonathan Parker,	}	<i>Wounded.</i>			2		
Eleazer Kingsbury,							
Tolman,							
SUDBURY.							
Josiah Haynes,	}	<i>Killed.</i>	2				
Asahel Reed,							
Joshua Haynes, Jun.		<i>Wounded.</i>			1		
ACTON.							
Capt. Isaac Davis,	}	<i>Killed.</i>	3				
Abner Hosmer,							
James Heywood,*							
BEDFORD.							
Jonathan Wilson,		<i>Killed.</i>	1		1		
Job Lane,		<i>Wounded.</i>					
WOBURN.							
Asahel Porter,	}	<i>Killed.</i>	2		3		
Daniel Thompson,							
George Reed,	}	<i>Wounded.</i>					
Jacob Bacon,							
Johnson,							
MEDFORD.							
Henry Putnam,	}	<i>Killed.</i>	2				
William Polly,							
CHARLESTOWN.							
James Miller,	}	<i>Killed.</i>	2				
C. Barber's son,							

* Killed in Lexington, at the house formerly owned by Benjamin Fisk. He was coming to the house, and met a British soldier coming out. They both took aim and fired, and both fell.

WATERTOWN.		Killed.	Wound.	Missing.
Joseph Coolidge,	<i>Killed.</i>	1		
FRAMINGHAM.				
Daniel Hemenway,	<i>Wounded.</i>		1	
DEDHAM.				
Elias Haven,	<i>Killed.</i>	1		
Israel Everett,	<i>Wounded.</i>		1	
STOW.				
Daniel Conant,	<i>Wounded.</i>		1	
ROXBURY.				
Elijah Seaver,	<i>Missing.</i>			1
BROOKLINE.				
Isaac Gardner, Esq.	<i>Killed.</i>	1		
BILLERICA.				
John Nickols,	} <i>Wounded.</i>		2	
Timothy Blanchard,				
CHELMSFORD.				
Aaron Chamberlain,	} <i>Wounded.</i>		2	
Oliver Barron,				
SALEM.				
Benjamin Pierce,	<i>Killed.</i>	1		
NEWTON.				
Noah Wiswall,	<i>Wounded.</i>		1	
DANVERS.				
Henry Jacobs,	} <i>Killed.</i>	7		
Samuel Cook,				
Ebenezer Goldthwait,				
George Southwick,				
Benjamin Daland,				
Jotham Webb,				
Perley Putnam,				

Nathan Putnam,	}	<i>Wounded.</i>	Killed.	Wound.	Missing.
Dennis Wallace,				2	
Joseph Bell,		<i>Missing.</i>			1

BEVERLY.

Reuben Kenyme,	}	<i>Killed.</i>	1		
Nathaniel Cleves,					
Samuel Woodbury,		<i>Wounded.</i>		3	
William Dodge, 3d,					

LYNN.

Abednego Ramsdell,	}	<i>Killed.</i>	4		
Daniel Townsend,					
William Flint,					
Thomas Hadley,	}				
Joshua Felt,		<i>Wounded.</i>		2	
Timothy Munroe,		<i>Missing.</i>			1
Josiah Breed,					
			49	36	5

The enemy lost 65 killed : 180 were wounded, and 28 taken prisoners. *Holmes's Annals.*

An English account, published in the Historical Collections, states their loss to have been 73 killed, 174 wounded, and 26 missing.

APPENDIX.

No. 1.

I, ELIJAH SANDERSON, of Salem, in the county of Essex, cabinet-maker, aged seventy-three years, on oath depose as follows:

In the spring of 1775, I resided at Lexington, and had resided there then more than a year. In the spring of that year, the officers of the British regular troops in Boston were frequently making excursions, in small parties, into the country, and often, in the early part of the day, in pleasant weather, passed through Lexington, and usually were seen returning before evening. I lived then on the main road, about three quarters of a mile east of the meeting-house.

On the evening of the 18th April, 1775, we saw a party of officers pass up from Boston, all dressed in blue wrappers. The unusually late hour of their passing excited the attention of the citizens. I took my gun and cartridge-box, and, thinking something must be going on more than common, walked up to John Buckman's tavern, near the meeting-house. After some conversation among the citizens assembled there, an old gentleman advised, that some one should follow those officers, and endeavour to ascertain their object. I then observed, that, if any one would let me have a horse, I would go in pursuit. Thaddens Harrington told me, I might take his, which was there. I took his, and Solomon Brown proposed to accompany me on his own horse. Jonathan Loring also went with us. We started, probably, about nine o'clock; and we agreed, if we could find the officers, we would return and give information, as the fears were, that their object was, to come back in the night, and seize Hancock and Adams, and carry them into Boston. It had been rumoured, that the British officers had threatened, that Hancock and Adams should not stay at Lexington. They had been boarding some time at Parson Clark's.

We set out in pursuit. Just before we got to Brooks's in Lincoln, while riding along, we were stopped by nine British officers, who were paraded across the road. They were all mounted. One rode up and seized my bridle, and another my arm, and one put his pistol to my breast, and told me, if I resisted, I was a dead man. I asked, what he wanted. He replied, he wanted to detain me a little while. He ordered me to get off my horse. Several of them dismounted and threw down the wall, and led us into the field. They examined and questioned us where we were going, &c. Two of them staid in the road, and the other seven with us, relieving each other from time to time. They detained us in that vicinity till a quarter past two o'clock at night. An officer, who took out his watch, informed me what the time was. It was a bright moon-light after the rising of the moon, and a pleasant evening. During our detention, they put many questions to us, which I evaded. They kept us separately, and treated us very civilly. They particularly inquired where Hancock and Adams were; also about the population. One said, "You've been numbering the inhabitants, hav'n't ye?" I told him how many it was reported there were. One of them spoke up

and said, "There were not so many, men, women and children." They asked as many questions as a yankee could.

While we were under detention, they took two other prisoners, one Allen, a one-handed pedlar, and Col. Paul Revere; also, they attempted to stop a man on horseback, who, we immediately after understood, was Dr. Prescott's son. He was well mounted, and, after turning from the road into the field toward us, he put spurs to his horse and escaped. Several of the officers pursued him, but could not overtake him.

After they had taken Revere, they brought him within half a rod of me, and I heard him speak up with energy to them, "Gentlemen, you've missed of your aim!" One said, rather hardly, "What of our aim!" Revere replied, "I came out of Boston an hour after your troops had come out of Boston and landed at Lechmere's Point, and if I had not known people had been sent out to give information to the country, and time enough to get fifty miles, I would have ventured one shot from you, before I would have suffered you to have stopped me." Upon this, they went a little aside and conversed together. They then ordered me to untie my horse, (which was tied to a little birch,) and mount. They kept us in the middle of the road, and rode on each side of us. We went toward Lexington. They took all of us, (Revere, Loring, and Brown, and myself.) My horse not being swift, and they riding at considerable speed, one of the officers pressed my horse forward, by striking him with his hanger. When we had arrived within fifty or one hundred rods of the meeting-house, Loring (as he afterwards informed me) told them, "The bell's a ringing, the town's alarmed, and you're all dead men." They then stopped—conferred together. One then dismounted, and ordered me to dismount, and said to me, "I must do you an injury." I asked, what he was going to do to me now? He made no reply, but with his hanger cut my bridle and girth, and then mounted, and they rode in a good smart trot on toward Boston. We then turned off to pass through the swamp, through the mud and water, intending to arrive at the meeting-house before they could pass, to give information to our people. Just before they got to the meeting-house, they had halted, which led us to hope, we should get there first; but they soon started off again at full speed, and we saw no more of them.

I went to the tavern. The citizens were coming and going; some went down to find whether the British were coming; some came back, and said there was no truth in it. I went into the tavern, and, after a while, went to sleep in my chair by the fire. In a short time after, the drum beat, and I ran out to the common, where the militia were parading. The captain ordered them to fall in. I then fell in. 'Twas all in the utmost haste. The British troops were then coming on in full sight. I had no musket, having sent it home, the night previous, by my brother, before I started for Concord; and, reflecting I was of no use, I stepped out again from the company about two rods, and was gazing at the British, coming on in full career. Several mounted British officers were forward; I think, five. The commander rode up, with his pistol in his hand, on a canter, the others following, to about eight or ten rods from the company, perhaps nearer, and ordered them to disperse. The words he used were harsh. I cannot remember them exactly. He then said, "Fire!" and he fired his own pistol, and the other officers soon fired, and with that the main body came up and fired, but did not take sight. They loaded again as soon as possible. All was smoke when the foot fired. I heard no particular orders after what the commander first said. I looked, and, seeing nobody fall, thought to be sure they couldn't be firing balls, and I didn't move off. After our militia had dispersed, I saw them firing at one man, (Solomon Brown,) who was stationed behind a wall. I saw the wall smoke with the bullets hitting it. I then knew they were firing balls.

After the affair was over, he told me he fired into a solid column of them, and then retreated. He was in the cow yard. The wall saved him. He legged it just about the time I went away. In a minute or two after, the British musick struck up, and their troops paraded, and marched right off for Concord.

I went home after my gun,—found it was gone. My brother had it. I returned to the meeting-house, and saw to the dead. I saw blood where the column of the British had stood when Solomon Brown fired at them. This was several rods from where any of our militia stood; and I then supposed, as well as the rest of us, that that was the blood of the British.

I assisted in carrying some of the dead into the meeting-house.

Some days before the battle, I was conversing with Jonas Parker, who was killed, and heard him express his determination never to run from before the British troops.

In the afternoon I saw the reinforcement come up under Lord Percy. I then had no musket, and retired to Estabrook's Hill, whence I saw the reinforcement meet the troops retreating from Concord. When they met, they halted some time. After this, they set fire to Deacon Loring's barn; then to his house; then to widow Mulliken's house; then to the shop of Nathaniel Mulliken, a watch and clock maker; and to the house and shop of Joshua Bond. All these were near the place where the reinforcements took refreshments. They hove fire into several other buildings. It was extinguished after their retreat.

During the day, the women and children had been so scattered and dispersed, that most of them were out of the way when the reinforcements arrived.

I now own the musket, which I then owned, and which my brother had that day, and told me he fired at the British with it.

ELIJAH SANDERSON.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

ESSEX, ss. *December 17th*, 1824.—Then the above-named Elijah Sanderson, a gentleman of truth and respectability, subscribed and made oath to the above-written affidavit, before

BENJ. MERRILL, *Just. Peace and Quorum.*



No. 2.

I, WILLIAM MUNROE, of Lexington, on oath do testify, that I acted as orderly sergeant in the company commanded by Capt. John Parker, on the 19th of April, 1775; that, early in the evening of the 18th of the same April, I was informed by Solomon Brown, who had just returned from Boston, that he had seen nine British officers on the road, travelling leisurely, sometimes before and sometimes behind him; that he had discovered, by the occasional blowing aside of their top coats, that they were armed. On learning this, I supposed they had some design upon Hancock and Adams, who were then at the house of the Rev. Mr. Clark, and immediately assembled a guard of eight men, with their arms, to guard the house. About midnight, Col. Paul Revere rode up and requested admittance. I told him the family had just retired, and had requested, that they might not be disturbed by any noise about the house. "Noise!" said he, "you'll have noise enough before long. The regulars are coming out." We then permitted him to pass. Soon after, Mr. Lincoln came. These gentlemen came different routes. Revere came over the ferry to Charlestown, and Lincoln over the neck through Roxbury;

and both brought letters from Dr. Warren in Boston to Hancock and Adams, stating, that a large body of British troops had left Boston, and were on their march to Lexington. On this, it was thought advisable, that Hancock and Adams should withdraw to some distant part of the town. To this Hancock consented with great reluctance, and said, as he went off, "If I had my musket, I would never turn my back upon these troops." I however conducted them to the north part of the town, and then returned to the meeting-house, where I arrived at about two o'clock on the morning of the 19th. On the arrival of Col. Revere, the alarm had been given, and, on my return, I found Capt. Parker and his militia company paraded on the common, a little in the rear of the meeting-house. About that time, one of our messengers, who had been sent toward Cambridge to get information of the movement of the regulars, returned and reported, that he could not learn, that there were any troops on the road from Boston to Lexington, which raised some doubt as to their coming, and Capt. Parker dismissed his company, with orders to assemble again at the beat of the drum. Between day-light and sunrise, Capt. Thaddeus Bowman rode up and informed, that the regulars were near. The drum was then ordered to be beat, and I was commanded by Capt. Parker to parade the company, which I accordingly did, in two ranks, a few rods northerly of the meeting-house.

When the British troops had arrived within about a hundred rods of the meeting-house, as I was afterwards told by a prisoner, which we took, "they heard our drum, and supposing it to be a challenge, they were ordered to load their muskets, and to move at double quick time." They came up almost upon a run. Col. Smith and Maj. Pitcairn rode up some rods in advance of their troops, and within a few rods of our company, and exclaimed, "Lay down your arms, you rebels, and disperse!" and immediately fired his pistol. Pitcairn then advanced, and, after a moment's conversation with Col. Smith, he advanced with his troops, and, finding we did not disperse, they being within four rods of us, he brought his sword down with great force, and said to his men, "Fire, damn you, fire!" The front platoon, consisting of eight or nine, then fired, without killing or wounding any of our men. They immediately gave a second fire, when our company began to retreat, and, as I left the field, I saw a person firing at the British troops from Buckman's back door, which was near our left, where I was parading the men when I retreated. I was afterward told, of the truth of which I have no doubt, that the same person, after firing from the back door, went to the front door of Buckman's house, and fired there. How many of our company fired before they retreated, I cannot say; but I am confident some of them did. When the British troops came up, I saw Jonas Parker standing in the ranks, with his balls and flints in his hat, on the ground, between his feet, and heard him declare, that he would never run. He was shot down at the second fire of the British, and, when I left, I saw him struggling on the ground, attempting to load his gun, which I have no doubt he had once discharged at the British. As he lay on the ground, they run him through with the bayonet. In the course of the day, I was on the ground where the British troops were when they first heard our drum beat, which was about one hundred rods below the meeting-house, and saw the ends of a large number, I should judge two hundred, of cartridges, which they had dropped, when they charged their pieces. About noon, I was at the north part of the town, at the house of a Mr. Simonds, where I saw the late Col. Baldwin, who informed me, that he had the custody of some prisoners, that had been put under his charge, and requested to know of me what should be done with them. I gave my opinion, that they should be sent to that part of Woburn, now Burlington, or to Chelmsford. On the return of the British troops from

Concord, they stopped at my tavern house in Lexington, and dressed their wounded. I had left my house in the care of a lame man, by the name of Raymond, who supplied them with whatever the house afforded, and afterward, when he was leaving the house, he was shot by the regulars, and found dead within a few rods of the house.

WILLIAM MUNROE.

MIDDLESEX, 7th March, 1825.—Then personally appeared the aforesaid William Munroe, and made oath to the truth of the foregoing affidavit, by him subscribed, before me,

AMOS MUZZY, *Justice Peace.*



No. 3.

I, JOHN MUNROE, of Lexington, a collector of tolls for the Middlesex Turnpike, being in the seventy-seventh year of my age, on oath do depose and say, that I was a corporal in the Lexington company of militia, which was commanded by the late Capt. John Parker, in the year 1775; that, for some weeks previous to the 19th of April of that year, the company was frequently called out for exercise, and desired to furnish ourselves with arms and ammunition, and to be in constant readiness for action.

On the morning of the 19th, at about two o'clock, as near as I can recollect, Francis Brown, who was sergeant in the same company, called me out of my bed, and said, the British troops had left Boston, and were on their march to Lexington. I immediately repaired to the place of parade, which was the common, adjoining the meeting-house, where sixty or seventy of the company had assembled in arms. Capt. Parker ordered the roll to be called, and every man to load his piece with powder and ball. After remaining on parade some time, and there being no further accounts of the approach of the regulars, we were dismissed, but ordered to remain within call of the drum. About day-light, Capt. Parker had information, that a regiment of British troops were near, and immediately ordered the drum beat to arms. I took my station on the right. While the company were collecting, Capt. Parker, then on the left, gave orders for every man to stand his ground until he should order them to leave. Many of the company had withdrawn to a considerable distance, and, by the time sixty or seventy of them had collected, the drum still beating to arms, the front ranks of the British troops appeared within twelve or fifteen rods of our line. They continued their march to within about eight rods of us, when an officer on horseback, Lt. Col. Smith, who rode in front of the troops, exclaimed, "Lay down your arms, and disperse, you rebels!" Finding our company kept their ground, Col. Smith ordered his troops *to fire*. This order not being obeyed, he then said to them, "G—d damn you, fire!" The front platoon then discharged their pieces, and, another order being given to fire, there was a general discharge from the front ranks. After the first fire of the regulars, I thought, and so stated to Ebenezer Munroe, Jun. who stood next to me on the left, that they had fired nothing but powder; but, on the second firing, Munroe said, they had fired something more than powder, for he had received a wound in his arm; and now, said he, to use his own words, "I'll give them the guts of my gun." We then both took aim at the main body of the British troops,—the smoke preventing our seeing any thing but the heads of some of their horses,—and discharged our pieces. After the second fire from the British troops, I distinctly saw Jonas Parker struggling on the ground, with his gun in his hand, apparently attempting to load it. In this situation the British came up, run him through with the bayonet, and killed him on the spot.

After I had fired the first time, I retreated about ten rods, and then loaded my gun a second time, with two balls, and, on firing at the British, the strength of the charge took off about a foot of my gun barrel.

Such was the general confusion, and so much firing on the part of the British, that it was impossible for me to know the number of our men, who fired immediately on receiving the second fire from the British troops; but that some of them fired, besides Ebenezer Munroe and myself, I am very confident. The regulars kept up a fire, in all directions, as long as they could see a man of our company in arms. Isaac Muzzy, Jonathan Harrington, and my father, Robert Munroe, were found dead near the place where our line was formed. Samuel Hadley and John Brown were killed after they had gotten off the common. Asabel Porter, of Woburn, who had been taken a prisoner by the British on their march to Lexington, attempted to make his escape, and was shot within a few rods of the common. Caleb Harrington was shot down on attempting to leave the meeting-house, where he and some others had gone, before the British soldiers came up, for the purpose of removing a quantity of powder that was stored there.

On the morning of the 19th, two of the British soldiers, who were in the rear of the main body of their troops, were taken prisoners and disarmed by our men, and, a little after sun-rise, they were put under the care of Thomas R. Willard and myself, with orders to march them to Woburn Precinct, now Burlington. We conducted them as far as Capt. James Read's, where they were put into the custody of some other persons, but whom I do not now recollect. JOHN MUNROE.

MIDDLESEX, SS. *December 28th, 1824.*—Then the above-named John Munroe made oath to the truth of the foregoing affidavit, by him subscribed, before me,

NATHAN CHANDLER, *Justice of the Peace.*



No. 4.

I, EBENEZER MUNROE, of Ashburnham, in the county of Worcester and commonwealth of Massachusetts, in the seventy-third year of my age, on oath depose and say, that I was an inhabitant of Lexington in the county of Middlesex in the year 1775; that, during the night of the 18th of April of that year, I was alarmed by one Micah Nagles, who stated, that the British troops were on their march from Boston, and that Lieut. Tidd requested myself and others to meet on the common as soon as possible. I accordingly repaired to the common, the usual place of parade, where I found Capt. Parker, and, I should think, about forty of the company had collected. The weather being rather chilly, after calling the roll, we were dismissed, but ordered to remain within call of the drum. The men generally went into the tavern adjoining the common. In the mean time, persons were sent toward Boston to get some intelligence, if possible, of the regulars. The last person sent was Thaddeus Bowman, who returned between day-light and sun-rise, and informed Capt. Parker, that the British troops were within a mile of the meeting-house. Capt. Parker immediately ordered the drum beat to arms. I was the first that followed the drum. I took my station on the right of our line, which was formed from six to ten rods back of the meeting-house, facing south. About seventy of our company had assembled when the British troops appeared. Some of our men went into the meeting-house, where the town's powder was kept, for the purpose of replenishing their stock of ammunition. When the regulars had arrived within eighty or one hundred rods, they, hearing our drum beat, halted, charged their guns, and

doubled their ranks, and marched up at quick step. Capt. Parker ordered his men to stand their ground, and not to molest the regulars, unless they meddled with us. The British troops came up directly in our front. The commanding officer advanced within a few rods of us, and exclaimed, "Disperse, you damned rebels! you dogs, run!—Rush on my boys!" and fired his pistol. The fire from their front ranks soon followed. After the first fire, I received a wound in my arm, and then, as I turned to run, I discharged my gun into the main body of the enemy. As I fired, my face being toward them, one ball cut off a part of one of my ear-locks, which was then pinned up. Another ball passed between my arm and my body, and just marked my clothes. The first fire of the British was regular; after that, they fired promiscuously. As we retreated, one of our company, Benjamin Sampson, I believe, who was running with me, turned his piece and fired. When I fired, I perfectly well recollect of taking aim at the regulars. The smoke, however, prevented my being able to see many of them. The balls flew so thick, I thought there was no chance for escape, and that I might as well fire my gun as stand still and do nothing. I am confident, that it was the determination of most of our company, in case they were fired upon, to return the fire. I did not hear Capt. Parker give orders to his company to disperse. When the British came up in front of the meeting-house, Joshua Simonds was in the upper gallery, an open cask of powder standing near him, and he afterward told me, that he cocked his gun and placed the muzzle of it close to the cask of powder, and determined to "touch it off," in case the troops had come into the gallery. After our company had all dispersed, and the British had done firing, they gave three cheers. After they had marched off for Concord, we took two prisoners, who were considerably in the rear of the main body. I carried their arms into Buckman's tavern, and they were taken by some of our men, who had none of their own. I believed, at the time, that some of our shots must have done execution. I was afterward confirmed in this opinion, by the observations of some prisoners, whom we took in the afternoon, who stated, that one of their soldiers was wounded in the thigh, and that another received a shot through his hand.

EBENEZER MUNROE.

MIDDLESEX, ss. 2d April, 1825.—Then personally appeared the aforesaid Ebenezer Munroe, and made oath to the truth of the foregoing statement, before me,

STEPHEN PATCH, *Justice Peace.*



No. 5.

I, WILLIAM TIDD, of Lexington, in the county of Middlesex, do testify and declare, that I was a lieutenant in the company of Lexington militia, commanded by Capt. John Parker, in the year 1775; that, previous to the 19th of April of that year, it was expected the British would soon commence hostilities upon the then Provincials; that said company frequently met for exercise, the better to be prepared for defence; that, on the evening previous to the 19th, a number of the militia met at my house for the above purpose; that, about two o'clock on the morning of the 19th, I was notified, that, the evening previous, several of the British officers had been discovered riding up and down the road leading to Concord; that they had detained and insulted the passing inhabitants; and that a body of the regulars were then on the march from Boston towards Lexington;—I then immediately repaired to the parade ground of said company, where, after its assemblage and roll call, we were dismissed by Capt. Parker, with orders to assemble at the beat of the drum;—that, at about five o'clock of said morning, intelligence was re-

ceived, that the British were within a short distance; and, on the beat to arms, I immediately repaired to where our company were fast assembling; that when about sixty or seventy of them had taken post, the British had arrived within sight, and were advancing on a quick march towards us, when I distinctly heard one of their officers say, "Lay down your arms, and disperse, ye rebels!" They then fired upon us. I then retreated up the north road, and was pursued about thirty rods by an officer on horseback, (supposed to be Maj. Pitcairn,) calling out to me, "Damn you, stop, or you are a dead man!"—I found I could not escape him, unless I left the road. Therefore I sprang over a pair of bars, made a stand, and discharged my gun at him; upon which he immediately returned to the main body, which shortly after took up their march for Concord.

WILLIAM TIDD.

MIDDLESEX, ss. *December 29, 1824.*—William Tidd, aforementioned, personally made oath to the truth of the foregoing declaration, by him subscribed, before

NATHAN CHANDLER, *Justice of the Peace.*



No. 6.

I, NATHAN MUNROE, of Lexington, in the county of Middlesex and state of Massachusetts, do testify and say, that I was enrolled as a soldier in the company commanded by Capt. John Parker of said Lexington, in the year 1775; and, knowing that several British officers went up the road towards Concord in the evening of the 18th of April of said year, I, with Benjamin Tidd, at the request of my captain, went to Bedford in the evening, and notified the inhabitants through the town, to the great road at Merriam's Corner, so called, in Concord, and then returned to Lexington. When arrived at the common, the bell was ringing, and the company collecting. I immediately got my arms and went to the parade. Capt. Parker gave orders to us to load our guns, but not to fire, unless we were fired upon first. About five o'clock in the morning, the British made their appearance at the east end of the meeting-house, near where our men were, and immediately commenced firing on us. I got over the wall into Buckman's land, about six rods from the British, and then turned and fired at them. About the middle of the forenoon, Capt. Parker, having collected part of his company, marched them towards Concord, I being with them. We met the regulars in the bounds of Lincoln, about noon, retreating towards Boston. We fired on them, and continued so to do until they met their reinforcement in Lexington.

NATHAN MUNROE.

MIDDLESEX, ss. LEXINGTON, *December 22, 1824.*—Then the above-named Nathan Munroe made oath to the above, and subscribed his name to the same, before me,

AMOS MUZZY, *Justice of the Peace.*



No. 7.

I, AMOS LOCK, of Lexington, in the county of Middlesex, testify and declare, that, between two and three o'clock on the morning of April the 19th, 1775, I heard the bell ring, which I considered as an alarm, in consequence of a report, that John Hancock and Samuel Adams were at the house of the Rev. Jonas Clark, and that it was expected, the British would attempt to take them. Therefore Ebenezer Lock and myself, both being armed, repaired, with all possible speed, to the meeting-house.

On our arrival, we found the militia were collecting ; but, shortly after, some person came up the road with a report, that there were not any regulars between Boston and Lexington. Consequently we concluded to return to our families. We had not proceeded far, before we heard a firing ; upon which we immediately returned, coming up towards the easterly side of the common, where, under the cover of a wall, about twenty rods distant from the common, where the British then were, we found Asahel Porter, of Woburn, shot through the body ; upon which Ebenezer Lock took aim, and discharged his gun at the Britons, who were then but about twenty rods from us. We then fell back a short distance, and the enemy, soon after, commenced their march for Concord.

AMOS LOCK.

MIDDLESEX, ss. *December 29, 1824.*—Then the above-named Amos Lock personally appeared, and made oath to the truth of the foregoing affidavit, by him subscribed, before me,

NATHAN CHANDLER, *Justice of the Peace.*



No. 8.

I, JOSEPH UNDERWOOD, of Lexington, in the seventy-sixth year of my age, on oath do testify, that, on the evening of the 18th April, 1775, in consequence of a report, that some British officers had passed through town toward Concord, about forty of the militia company assembled, early in the evening, at Buckman's tavern, near the meeting-house, for the purpose of consulting what measures should be adopted. It was concluded to send persons toward Concord to watch the motions of the British officers ; and others toward Boston, to ascertain if there were any movements of the British troops. A guard was stationed at the house of the Rev. Mr. Clark, for the purpose of protecting Hancock and Adams, who were then residing at Mr. Clark's. The first certain information we had of the approach of the British troops, was given by Thaddeus Bowman, between four and five o'clock on the morning of the 19th, when Capt. Parker's company were summoned by the beat of the drum, and the line formed. When the regulars had arrived within about one hundred rods of our line, they charged their pieces, and then moved toward us at a quick step. Some of our men, on seeing them, proposed to quit the field ; but Capt. Parker gave orders for every man to stand his ground, and said he would order the first man shot, that offered to leave his post. I stood very near Capt. Parker, when the regulars came up, and am confident he did not order his men to disperse, till the British troops had fired upon us the second time.

JOSEPH UNDERWOOD.

MIDDLESEX, ss. *7 March, 1825.*—Then personally appeared the said Joseph Underwood, and made oath to the within statement, by him subscribed, before me,

AMOS MUZZY, *Justice of Peace.*



No. 9.

I, ABIJAH HARRINGTON, one of the representatives to the General Court from the town of Lexington, on oath do testify, that, in April, 1775, I lived about a mile and a quarter below the meeting-house in Lexington. After hearing the firing, on the morning of the 19th, and not getting any certain information whether the British had killed any of our men, I went up to the meeting-house, soon after the regulars had marched off for

Concord, and, at the distance of about ten or twelve rods below the meeting-house, where I was told the main body of their troops stood, when they were fired upon by our militia, I distinctly saw blood on the ground, in the road, and, the ground being a little descending, the blood had run along the road about six or eight feet. A day or two after the 19th, I was telling Solomon Brown of the circumstance of my having seen blood in the road, and where it was. He then stated to me, that he fired in that direction, and the road was then full of regulars, and he thought he must have hit some of them.

I further testify, that I have heard the late Deacon Benjamin Brown repeatedly say, that he took a British soldier prisoner, on the morning of the 19th, a few rods below the meeting-house, immediately after the regulars left the common for Concord, and took his gun from him.

ABIJAH HARRINGTON.

MIDDLESEX, ss. 4th April, 1825.—Then personally appeared the aforesaid Abijah Harrington, and made oath to the foregoing affidavit, before me,

AMOS MUZZY, *Justice of Peace.*



No. 10.

I, JAMES REED, of Burlington, in the county of Middlesex and commonwealth of Massachusetts, do testify and declare, that, soon after the British troops had fired upon the militia at Lexington, on the morning of the 19th of April, 1775, and had taken up their march towards Concord, I arrived at the common, near the meeting-house, where I found several of the militia dead, and others wounded. I also saw a British soldier march up the road, near said meeting-house, and Joshua Reed of Woburn met him, and demanded him to surrender. He then took his arms and equipments from him, and I took charge of him, and took him to my house, then in Woburn Precinct. I also testify, that E. Welsh brought to my house, soon after I returned home with my prisoner, two more of said British troops; and two more were immediately brought, and I suppose, by John Munroe and Thomas R. Willard of Lexington; and I am confident, that one more was brought, but by whom, I don't now recollect. All the above prisoners were taken at Lexington immediately after the main body had left the common, and were conveyed to my house early in the morning; and I took charge of them. In the afternoon five or six more of said British troops, that were taken prisoners in the afternoon, when on the retreat from Concord, were brought to my house and put under my care. Towards evening, it was thought best to remove them from my house. I, with the assistance of some others, marched them to one Johnson's in Woburn Precinct, and there kept a guard over them during the night. The next morning, we marched them to Billerica; but the people were so alarmed, and not willing to have them left there, we then took them to Chelmsford, and there the people were much frightened; but the Committee of Safety consented to have them left, provided, that we would leave a guard. Accordingly, some of our men agreed to stay.

JAMES REED.

MIDDLESEX, ss. January 19, 1825.—Then the within-named James Reed subscribed and swore to the aforementioned statement, before

AMOS MUZZY, *Justice of Peace.*



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